REMARKS

Claims 1-3, 5-11, and 13-25 are pending in this application. Claims 17-19 are withdrawn from consideration. In light of the amendments and remarks included herein, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the outstanding rejections.

By this amendment, Applicants have amended the claims to more appropriately recite the present invention. These amendments are being made without conceding the propriety of the Examiner's rejections, but merely to timely advance prosecution of the present application.

In the outstanding Official Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1-3, 5-11, 14-15, and 20-25 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Sameshima* (USP 6,115,568); and rejected claims 16 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over *Sameshima* in view of OKI Technical Review. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Prior Art Rejections

By this amendment, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite wherein the contacting member is supported inside the main body when a part of the outer covering is opened, wherein the slide section is provided with a member which causes the contacting member to contact the supporting member when the part of the outer covering is closed, and wherein when the part of the outer covering is opened, the contacting member is detached from the supporting member by operation of the member of the slide section. Applicants respectfully submit that the cited reference fails to teach or suggest this claim element.

The image forming apparatus of *Sameshima* is arranged in such a manner that an intermediate transfer unit 5 is mounted on a drawing unit 17 which can be drawn in and out from the side face of a main body of the apparatus sand the intermediate transfer unit 5 is drawn in and out by drawing in and out the drawing unit 17, and the intermediate transfer unit 5 is positioned with respect to a predetermined position (image forming position) in the apparatus.

A detaching/attaching mechanism for an image support 1 of the intermediate transfer unit 5 is arranged such that, when the drawing unit 17, which has been drawn out from the side face of the apparatus main body, is pushed into the apparatus, the intermediate transfer unit 5, which is supported by, or mounted on, the drawing unit 17 is moved to underneath the image supporter 1.

The detaching/attaching mechanism is also arranged such that when the drawing unit 17 is pushed, a positioning pin 24 provided at the lower side of the drawing unit 17 contacts, is engaged with, the frame supporting a second transfer roller 11. As shown in Fig. 13, the second transfer roller 11 rotates around the rotation axis of the supporting frame and moves upward, so as to push the intermediate transfer unit 5 towards the image supporter 1. As a result of this, the image supporter 1 and the intermediate transfer unit 5 are positioned and also the intermediate transfer unit 5 and the secondary transfer member are positioned (i.e., the primary transfer section and the secondary transfer section are positioned).

In contrast, the detaching/attaching mechanism of the subject application is arranged such that the side cover 35 is openable with respect to the side face of the device's main body and thus the space inside the device is exposed to the outside by opening the side cover 35. At this stage, the transfer belt unit 8 (contacting member) remains inside the device and only the side cover 35 is drawn out of the device in conjunction with the slide section 18.

The slide section is provided with slide section is provided with slide cams 18a and 18b. When the side cover 35 is closed, the slide cams 18a and 18b contact a unit lift arm 211 in the device so that the unit lift arm 211 rotates. By a lift block 212 and a lift spring (elastic member) 213 of the unit lift arm 211, the supporting axis 78 of the transfer belt unit 8 is pushed up toward the image supporters 3a-3d. With this, the transfer belt 7 contacts the surface of the image supporters 3a-3d.

As such, the image forming apparatus of *Sameshima* is arranged such that the intermediate transfer unit 5 is drawn in and out by sliding the drawing unit 17 in and out from the side face of the device's main body. In contrast, the image forming device of the subject

application is arranged such that only the side cover 35 is slide in and out from the device while the transfer belt unit 8 remains inside the device.

In addition, the image forming device of the subject application is provided with the detaching/attaching mechanism so that the hands of the operator do not directly touch the surface of the transfer belt 7 of the transfer belt unit 8 and the transport path inside the device is extensively exposed to the outside by causing the transfer belt 7 to be detached from the image supporters 3a-3d. This arrangement takes into account that the existence, or position, of a jammed sheet on the transfer path can be easily recognized and the jammed sheet can be easily removed.

The transfer belt 7 may be a thin film. If the hands of the operator directly touch the belt or the belt is damaged, an image (state of the image) is defected in the step of transferring a toner image from the image supporter to the transfer member (recording medium). As such, the device of the subject application provides only the side cover 35 being drawn or slid in and out from the device, while the transfer belt unit 8 remains inside the device.

In contrast, in *Sameshima*, since the intermediate transfer unit 5 is drawn in and out from the device's main body, the transfer belt is exposed when the unit 5 is drawn out. It is therefore probably that the hands of the operator directly touch the transfer belt by mistake or the belt is damaged by a fallen object.

In the subject application, the side cover supports a fixing unit 12 and a sheet transport path extending from the fixing unit 12 and a sheet transport path extending from the fixing unit 12 (downstream of the fixing unit 12). These members are therefore drawn out when the side cover 35 is drawn out. ON this account, the sheet transport path in the vicinity of the fixing unit 12 is extensively exposed to the outside and therefore it is possible to easily recognize the position of a jammed sheet on the transfer path and smoothly remove the jammed sheet.

In contrast, in *Sameshima*, the intermediate transfer unit 5 is supported by, mounted on, the drawing unit 17 when the intermediate transfer unit 5 is drawn out. Fig. 2 of *Sameshima* clearly shows the intermediate transfer unit 5 makes it difficult to recognize the position of a jammed sheet on the sheet transport path in the device. Moreover, since the working space is

small, the removal of the recognized sheet cannot be smoothly done as the intermediate transfer unit 5 obstructs the removal. Further, since the intermediate transfer unit 5 must be detached from the device in order to smoothly carry out the removal, the workability is declined and the aforesaid problems regarding the exposed transfer belt are worse.

In addition, the image forming device of the subject application is provided with a plurality of photosensitive drums and the transfer belt unit contacts or is detached from one photosensitive drum when the side cover is opened/closed. The transfer belt unit contacts or is detached from the photosensitive drum in such a manner that the slide cam 18 provided in the slide mechanism for sliding and opening the side cover 35 causes the transfer belt unit to move up and down by elasticity, by means of the unit lift arm 211. As shown in Fig. 10, the transfer belt unit contacts or is detached from the remaining photosensitive drums by causing the transfer belt unit to move up/down by a cam mechanism.

A color image forming device is typically arranged such that a plurality of photosensitive drums are provided in parallel and a transfer belt unit contacts only a photosensitive drum which is directly involved with image formation. In other words, those photosensitive drums which are not directly involved with image formation are detached from the transfer belt unit. This is because a photosensitive drum is worn away and deteriorated by the contact with the transfer belt unit.

A color image forming device typically includes photosensitive drums corresponding to a monochrome recording mode and a color recording mode. IN accordance with the recording mode, the transfer belt unit must contact/is detached from either the photosensitive drum for monochrome image formation or the photosensitive drum for color image formation.

The image formation device of the subject application can efficiently deals with monochrome recording mode which is frequently used as compared to color recording mode. The image forming device of the subject application is so designed that image formation using a photosensitive drum for monochrome image formation is efficiently carried out. The image forming device of the subject application adopts a detaching/attaching mechanism in which the transfer belt unit contacts a photosensitive drum for monochrome image formation when the side

cover35 is closed, in order to allow image formation to be carried out immediately after closing the side cover 35. When the color recording mode is selected, the cam mechanism causes the transfer belt unit to contact a photosensitive drum for color image formation.

However, the image forming apparatus of *Sameshima* is provided only with one photosensitive drum, and there a second detaching/attaching mechanism such as the cam mechanism of he subject application is not disclosed.

For all of the reasons set forth above, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable over the reference as cited. It is respectfully requested that the outstanding rejection be withdrawn.

It is respectfully submit that claims 2-3, 6, and 25 are allowable for the reasons set forth above regard to the claim 1 at least based upon their dependency on claim 1. It is further respectfully submitted that claims 6-8 and 12 include elements similar to those set forth above regard to claim 1 and thus these claims, together with claims dependent thereon, are allowable for the reasons set forth above with regard to claim 1.

Conclusion

In view of the above amendment, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Catherine M. Voisinet (Reg. No. 52,327) at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

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Respectfully submitted,

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